



**Natalie E. Tennant**

Secretary of State  
State of West Virginia

January 15, 2014

The Honorable Earl Ray Tomblin  
Governor, State of West Virginia  
State Capitol  
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East  
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Dear Governor Tomblin,

As you know, many West Virginia businesses have been hit hard by the recent water emergency. The Secretary of State's Office is on the front lines working with West Virginia small business owners every single day. Taking care of the small businesses that grow our economy and create jobs is among my top priorities in this crisis.

My office is working closely with the State Legislature to pass House Bill 4175, the West Virginia Small Business Emergency Act. I have given both House Speaker Tim Miley and Senate President Jeff Kessler my commitment that the Secretary of State's Office will do anything it can to assist in this process.

While I am glad to see us taking swift action to support West Virginia business owners, I also want to be sure we are taking care of the workers they employ.

I spent two days out on the water lines last week talking with folks and handing out water. I met employees at local restaurants like Arby's and Shoney's. Many of these folks are making ends meet on minimum wage salaries and tips. Even one day off of work can keep them from making their mortgage payment or paying their daycare bill.

Fortunately, the Federal Disaster Declaration allows West Virginia to request Disaster Unemployment Assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for those folks who were forced to miss work. I believe it is imperative that we make this request as quickly as possible, so we can start getting folks the help they need.

My office stands ready to assist in any way we can. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Natalie E. Tennant".

Natalie E. Tennant  
West Virginia Secretary of State